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continued, and a series of papers on the peculiarities of Irish myths and folk stories, by Charles de Kay, is begun. The pictures are, as usual, among the best examples to be found of what is appropriate to magazine illustration. Mr. Pennell's pen-and-ink work, in his illustrations of the Guilds of the City of London, Mrs. Mary Hallock Foote's wash drawings of scenes of the Far West, and the copies of sketches and notes of detail by Gérôme are the most interesting to amateurs.

IN PASSE ROSE, A. S. Hardy has given us a historical novel which is not stuffed with borrowed archaeological details, made unreadable by affected archaisms, or spoiled by allusions to burning questions of the present day. It describes times long past, manners which have vanished from the earth, but his pictures are retained clear, and we have no difficulty in following the actions of his personages or in understanding their motives. All is as intelligible as in a story of to-day, or, we may add, in a tale of Chaucer's or a screed from the Odyssey. The time is toward the middle of Charlemagne's reign, the scene Maestricht and the neighboring country, the people knights and burghers, monks and vassals, Frankish ladies, Saxon captives, wandering Greeks and Provençals, pages, thralls and men-at-arms. The heroine, from whom the book is named, is a waif who is adopted by an old goldsmith and his wife, who forms a romantic attachment for a young knight of the Emperor's court, and follows him to the palace. In the course of her many adventures she discovers and frustrates a plot against Charlemagne's life, and wins his regard and his daughter's affection by her boldness and loyalty. Thus she gains her lover, to whom the princess was betrothed. The book is full of clever dramatic touches, like that of *Passe Rose* inventing a fairy tale to account for her possession of the knight's golden armlet, and of exquisite descriptive passages, like that of her refuge in the sheep-fold. The narrative never halts, and new complications occur to keep the reader's interest excited to the last. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

DIEGO VELASQUEZ AND HIS TIMES, translated from the German of Professor Carl Justi by Professor A. H. Keane, is a masterly study of the great Spanish artist. The author, following in this respect Raphael Mengs, rates his subject as the greatest of the naturalistic school of painters, greater than Titian or Rembrandt. He, indeed, asserts that Velasquez is one of these individualities that brook no comparison with any other. He does not attempt to sum up in a sentence what he has to say about him, but in the course of his large and handsome volume, of over five hundred pages, discusses fully but not redundantly the schools of painting prior to Velasquez's time, the influences that impressed their mark upon his youth, his journeys to Rome, his work in the Buen Retiro Palace, his portraits and his later pictures of idiots and philosophers, princes and beggars, saints and goddesses. The translation appears to be excellent. It has had the advantage of being revised by the author, with whose consent a few omissions of relatively unimportant matters have been made. It is supplied with a very useful index and illustrated with many fine wood-cuts and an etched portrait. It is in all respects a monumental work not likely to be superseded by any future publication. Published by J. B. Lippincott Co.

THE two first issues of the Riverside Library for Young People are admirably chosen for the purpose of interesting boys and girls in the history of their country. It is a truism often repeated but seldom acted on that it requires the maximum of skill and knowledge to write acceptably for the young. In getting Mr. John Fiske to write of the "War of Independence" and Horace E. Scudder to prepare an historical biography of George Washington, the publishers show that they fully appreciate this truth. These writers have, as a matter of course, done their work well, and the publishers, except in the matter of illustrations, have well seconded them. We would advise taking greater pains in this respect when preparing future

numbers of the series. In these days of reproduction by photographic process, it should not be necessary to turn the book around in order to look at a picture, nor should a small cut easily be accommodated in the text get a full page to itself. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

PICTURESQUE ALASKA may seem to many of our readers a contradiction in terms, and if one were to look at the illustrations only of the volume written by Abby Johnson Woodman and published by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., he would find in it no reason to believe otherwise. But the text is of a far different order. This journal of a tour along the coast from San Francisco to Sitka is well written, and is full of striking verbal pictures. The glaciers, mountains and pine forests of the land are described with photographic vividness. There is a short introductory note by John G. Whittier.

A HANDBOOK OF WOOD-CARVING, by Carrie Henderson, gives practical advice about tools and material, the woods best adapted for carving, different methods of obtaining relief and of finishing helps in designing, the proper use of stains and the like. It is concisely written, illustrated where necessary with small drawings of tools, and will solve many a question over which the amateur carver might well grow desperate if left without help. The author shows a due appreciation of the designs published in *The Art Amateur* by giving a list of the numbers in which they were published.

## Correspondence.

### NOTICE TO TRANSIENT READERS.

Readers of *The Art Amateur* who buy the magazine from month to month of newsdealers, instead of forwarding their subscriptions by the year, are particularly requested to send AT ONCE their names and addresses to the publisher, so that he may mail to them, for their information and advantage, such circulars as are sent to regular subscribers.

### OIL PAINTING QUERIES.

B. H., Mount Pleasant, Ia.—If the study of apples is to be used for decoration, the question of finishing the edge may depend upon the extent of surface required. Should this be as small as the study given, finish to the edge, whether bolting cloth or other material is used. Anything a little larger may have a margin left around and defined with a narrow line of Naples yellow. If very much larger, the colors may be used rather thin, to produce the effect of dye painting, and the leaves and branches may be lightly carried out to natural terminations, instead of being cut off at the margin. In this case, only the deepest shadows of the background should be put in, the rest of the surface being left untouched. Very little of the dark color at the left could be used; it must break and fade away, to appear consistent. This treatment will require more exercise of judgment than the literal copying first suggested.

H. T. T.—(1) Megilp is an unsafe vehicle. It gives a disagreeable shine to the painting and will probably crack. It is made of boiled linseed oil and mastic varnish. (2) Generally speaking, the clouds may be painted on the sky while it is yet wet; and they may thus be united in it by having their edges a little softened. But where the lights of the clouds are to be made with sharp, well-defined edges, these lights may be best produced by being placed in when the first flat painting is quite dry. (3) Distances are painted with the same tints as those used in the sky, somewhat strengthened, however, by deeper gray tones.

BRISTLES, Chicago.—We have more than once in these columns answered your question in the negative. No; it is

not good practice to lay in the subject first in bitumen for light and shade effect and wash over with "lakes" and madder. The bitumen will turn black and crack after a while. You may, however, lay in with burnt Sienna and black, using turpentine as a medium for the first painting only. This will preserve the drawing and keep the masses of light and shade distinct. When dry, this should be followed by a solid painting of the general tones of the picture. No washing over of lakes or madders should be attempted. Painting thinly should always be avoided.

MRS. B. B. H.—Oil paintings should be varnished—not to give a gloss to the surface—the varnish should not be thick enough for that—but many colors, especially the warm transparent ones, sink and lose tone in drying, and to restore them to their freshness permanently, varnish must be used. Painters have always avoided excessive varnishing.

### OUR COLOR STUDIES.

READER, Trenton, N. J.—You are right, of course. The way to view a reproduction of an oil painting is to look at it from the proper distance, as any sensible person would look at the original painting. "Sunset in the Village," given in our June number, is broadly painted, like all Bruce Crane's work. "A picture is not meant to smell of," as blunt old Sir Godfrey Kneller remarked to a fault-finding patron who, holding his portrait near his nose, found that it lacked "finish." We are glad to note the greatly increasing number of readers of *The Art Amateur* who are learning to appreciate the principle involved here. It is our aim to present to persons away from the great art centres faithful reproductions of various styles of brush-work such as they, otherwise, might never see. The large circulation of *The Art Amateur* proves that this is what is wanted. Still, we need hardly say that we do not confine our reproductions of oil paintings to examples of such breadth as the landscape by Mr. Crane. There are many excellent artists who, without too minute "finish" on the one hand, or excessive breadth in treatment on the other, produce most charming pictures and studies, and to the reproduction of their work we shall always show a preference.

### PICTURE-FRAMING.

SIR: Which is the better taste—to frame each picture as it individually deserves, or to use a variety of frames so as to avoid monotony? B. H., Mt. Pleasant, Ia.

Frame each picture on its merits, by all means. Do this, and there will be no monotony. Never forget that the first purpose of the frame is to show the picture to the best advantage.

### WALL DECORATION.

PERRY, New York.—As to the right use of stuff as a wall-covering, that resolves itself very much into a question of cost and cleanliness. That the effect of silk damask as a wall-covering is more beautiful than that of printed paper is not to be denied. But then the expense of it is proportionately greater, and, except in the country, the silk would last no longer in a state of decent cleanliness than paper. The use of chintz for bedroom walls is more within the means of most men, and it is a capital plan so to cover the walls, so long as the chintz does not go down too near the skirting; a dado of wood, paint, matting, or whatever it may be, is necessary in such a case. Walls are sometimes covered with contrasting stuffs, the filling of one material, the dado of another; but there could not be a more ill-advised proceeding. If you have stuff on part of the wall there is all the more need for sterner decoration on the other; and no more inappropriate position could be chosen for a textile fabric than the dado of a room. It is better that a dado should consist of something that can be washed.



"JUPITER AND THE MUSES." AFTER FLAXMAN. DECORATION FOR THE FRONT OF AN UPRIGHT PIANO.